

Eagle County School District Performance-Based Compensation Program

The Eagle County School District (ECSD) will collaborate with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) and the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) to expand its TAP program as follows: increase master and mentor teacher stipends; increase training and support for master and mentor teachers and principals, as well as career teachers; further differentiate compensation for teachers in high-poverty schools to include student achievement and recruitment incentives; expand the opportunities for teachers to be rewarded for individual classroom achievement to include teachers of kindergarten to grade 2 and grades 9 to 12; differentiate contracts for teachers to increase training in core content areas; and improve the effectiveness of student assessments, achievement data collection, and analysis at the district, building, and classroom levels.

Needs Assessment Results and General Information

ECSD serves 5,300 students in 15 traditional schools and one charter school. Students are from communities varying from ski resorts to small, rural towns. Despite this, ECSD shares similar racial and socioeconomic diversity characteristics with urban schools. More than 30 percent of students are English Language Learners (ELL), the fifth highest percentage in the state. Participating in the grant are the 13 high-poverty schools (with more than 30% of students from low-income families based on free/reduced price lunch eligibility).

Overall, ECSD schools scored close to average on the state student assessment. Because of the high percentage of ELL students, ECSD believes a better gauge of performance is the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) performance of English-speaking students and the percentage of ELL students who convert to fluent English proficient each year. ECSD has higher than average teacher turnover (21 percent vs. 16 percent state) due to the high cost of living in the area (third highest in state). Twenty-one percent of

teachers are in the district for less than 3 years and 85 percent of principals are in their current positions for less than 3 years.

Background

ECSD is the only school district in the country to have eliminated the lock-step salary schedule and implement a pure performance-based compensation system for teachers and principals. In 2002, the district implemented TAP in five schools and added five more the next year and the next. In 2004, officials implemented TAP districtwide. This grant will expand TAP.

Incentives

The Performance Compensation Committee voted unanimously to not return to a lock and step system for bonus payouts and salary increases. Salary increases will be determined by teacher evaluation scores (see "Evaluation" section of profile for details). The annual TIF bonus will be based on an index of student assessment results. This bonus is not added to the next year's salary. The index is made up of four components:

LOCATION(S)	Eagle County, Colorado
AWARD DATE	November 2006
DURATION	5 years
PARTNERS	National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET), Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)

- District-Wide ACT—The index increases when the district composite meets or exceeds the state composite.
- District-Wide CSAP—The index increases as more students “Catch-Up/Keep-Up” with previous CSAP results.
- Building-Wide CSAP—The index increases as buildings close the gap between where their previous achievement results stand and having 100% of students improving on the “Catch-Up/Keep-Up” model.
- Building-Wide NWEA—The index increases as NWEA tests given at the building level show “Significantly Above” average “Value-Added” results as calculated by the SAS-EVAAS method (commonly called “Sanders”).

The expanded program will include bonuses of up to \$10,000 for sustained individual classroom gains; hiring and annual bonuses for working in high-poverty schools; increased stipends for master and mentor teachers; and an expanded pool of teachers eligible to receive individual classroom performance gains. Additional training will also be provided as will differentiated contracts for teachers.

Evaluation

Currently, 50 percent of a teacher’s bonus is based on two classroom evaluations each year designed to measure teaching skills, knowledge, and responsibility; the other 50 percent is based on student achievement growth. Principal bonuses are also based 50 percent on evaluation and 50 percent on student growth. The new program will add elements listed above as well as additional staff training on the instructional best practices. ECSD will also evaluate, both qualitatively and quantitatively, TAP’s impact on student achievement; instruction and teacher effectiveness, which includes teacher attitudes; and recruitment and retention. Additionally, NIET conducts annual evaluations and will continue to do so as an in-kind service.

Resources

ECSD already supports TAP and will continue to support its expansion after the Teacher Incentive Fund grant. ECSD uses funds from a 2001 mill levy for teacher compensation increases voted on in a general election, Federal title funds, reallocated general operating funds, and new funds through the Colorado School Finance Act. In years 3 to 5 of the grant, ECSD will contribute \$566,532.

Data Systems

The current data management system has limitations due to multiple data sources and four incompatible databases; it does not lend itself to effective use by classroom teachers. ECSD will use grant funds to expand the data management capacity through the purchase of EDmin’s INFORM, a standards-based learning management system that uses the Web to track the performance of students and makes that information accessible to every teacher. The new system will work with the existing databases to create one data management system.

Year 2 Activities

- Hired a new Director of Human Resources, with an intent being that pay-for-performance methodologies would become the responsibility of the HR Department.
- Continued development of an enterprise-wide data management system with a primary focus on the component designed to collect, and eventually analyze, teacher evaluation scores.
- Formed performance compensation committee (PCC), chaired by new Dir. of HR; this committee will gather feedback from represented stakeholder groups and determine methodology for paying TIF bonuses.

- Developed and delivered, as well as contracted for, trainings for all principals and all categories of teachers (master, mentor, career).
- Hired a Director of Research and Evaluation.
- Determined use of team approach to payouts, as opposed to individual teacher linkages, would be used for teacher bonuses (only 30% of teaching staff were eligible for individual student-achievement-based payouts).

Outlook for Year 3

- Continue discussions surrounding development of methodology to pay individual teacher bonuses based on criteria similar to National Board Certification (portfolio of items), resulting in distribution of “superstar” bonuses of \$5000 - \$10,000.
- Continue professional development for all principals and all categories of teachers (master, mentor, career).
- Continue development of enterprise-wide data management system.
- Continue investigation of assessments for non-assessed content areas.